

CUT THE ROPE!

One cold Saturday morning when I was 12, Dad told me to start the tractor so we could take hay to some hungry horses. It was so cold that the tractor turned over only a couple of times before the battery died. When I informed my father, he told me to saddle up Blue and tie our sleigh to the saddle so we could pull a couple

bales of hay to the horses to tide them over

As Dad was losing consciousness, he yelled at me to run and get help.

until we could get the tractor started.

Blue, our thoroughbred studhorse, was in the prime of his life. He was a beautiful, powerful animal. I remember how he pranced around that morning looking for a good ride.

We put two 90-pound (41-kg) bales of hay on the sleigh, Dad mounted Blue, and we were off. I walked behind the sleigh to balance it. We soon arrived at the lane that led us to the winter pasture.

Things went well until we had gone about a third of the way down the lane. The

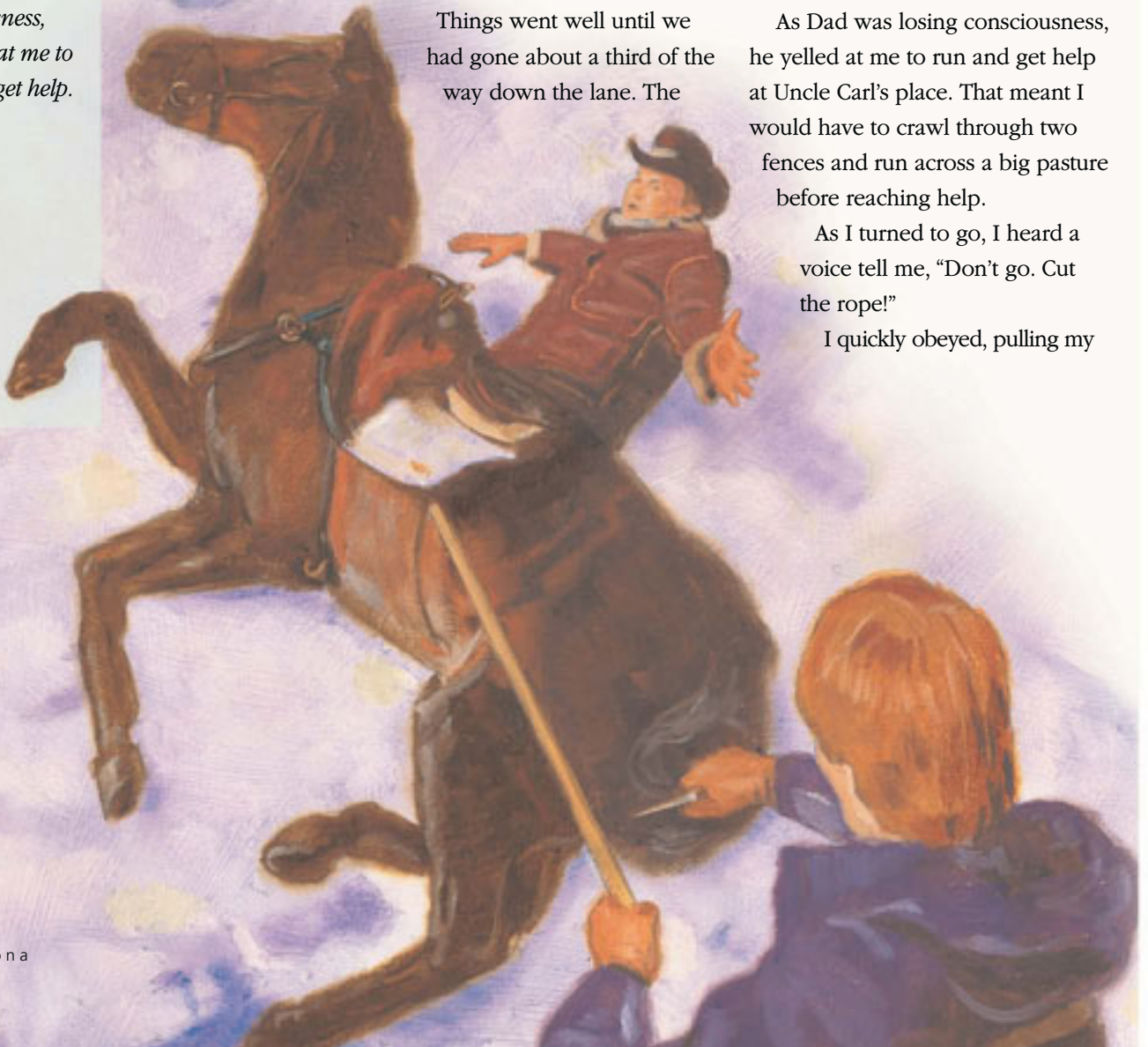
snow had drifted deep, and I could see that it was piling up in front of the sleigh. As the cinch tightened around Blue's chest, it cut off his ability to breathe. Suddenly he reacted.

Blue whirled around two or three times, trying to relieve the pressure on his chest. Dad quickly tried to dismount but was lashed to the side of the horse in the process. To make matters worse, Blue lost his footing on the ice under the snow, causing him to pitch over on his side, pinning my father beneath him.

As Dad was losing consciousness, he yelled at me to run and get help at Uncle Carl's place. That meant I would have to crawl through two fences and run across a big pasture before reaching help.

As I turned to go, I heard a voice tell me, "Don't go. Cut the rope!"

I quickly obeyed, pulling my



Boy Scout knife out of my pocket. I cut at the lariat rope for a few moments when, suddenly, Blue lurched to his feet and took off. The rope snapped, and my father rolled out of its coils rather than possibly being dragged to his death. I ran to his side.

Dad came to, got up, and assured me he was all right. We then went to find Blue, cleared the snow from in

front of the sleigh, retied the rope, and again headed for the horse pasture. We fed the horses and returned home.

I normally obeyed my father without question, and I was ready to run 10 minutes to my uncle's place for help. But his help would have come too late. That day, however, the voice of the Spirit came just in time. ■

Gerald G. Hodson, Utah, USA

MY PROMISE TO THE LORD

Several years ago my family was going through a difficult time. My parents had separated, and our family began to forget God's love.

To our great fortune, one of my mother's friends saw our need to draw closer to God and introduced us to the full-time missionaries. As they taught us the gospel, we realized that God had a plan for us, and despite our many challenges, He had not abandoned us. After we had come to understand these principles, my mother, sisters, and I decided to be baptized.

As we attended our Sunday meetings, our testimonies of the gospel grew. I soon desired to serve a full-time mission. It was not an easy decision, however, because I was the man of the house. My mother needed my help. Moreover, I began to receive many job offers and was accepted by several universities. I concluded to ask God for help and direction.

After praying, I turned to my scriptures and came upon the following verses:

"Wherefore, your family shall live.

"Behold, verily I say unto you, go from them only for a little time, and declare my word, and I will prepare a place for them" (D&C 31:5–6).

In that instant I strongly felt the Spirit and knew that what I had read was Heavenly Father's word to me.

Not long after that experience, I received my mission call. Before being set apart as a full-time missionary, I made a promise to my Heavenly Father that I would do His will as a missionary—that I would work diligently and sacrifice my all for Him. The only blessing I prayed for was to see my family together again someday.

My first year as a missionary was challenging, but my companions and I worked with all our hearts. About this time I received a marvelous letter from my mother telling me that my father had returned home! At that moment I remembered the promise I had made to God, and I recalled



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His promise in the Doctrine and Covenants: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10).

Several years have passed since my mission. Today my family and I still find joy in the gospel and through our covenants with God. I know that He lives. I know that He loves us. I know that He sent His Son to save us. I also know that when we make promises to Him and are faithful to those promises, He is faithful to us. ■

Juan Manuel Magaña Gómez, Guerrero, Mexico

HAD I ROBBED GOD?

A few weeks after my baptism at age 30, the president of our branch in Piura, Peru, asked to interview me to determine my worthiness to receive the Aaronic Priesthood.

After I sat down, President Jorge García offered a prayer. Then he asked me, “Do you believe in God?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?”

“Yes,” I replied again.

“Are you chaste?”

“Yes.”

To this point I had been confident in my answers, but then came the next question: “Do you pay a full tithe?”

I was speechless. In my mind I could see the illustration the missionaries had shown me when they taught the discussion on tithing. They had said that one-tenth of our income belongs to the Lord. Then I heard another question: “Didn’t the missionaries teach you the law of tithing?”

“They did teach me,” I replied, “but I just don’t pay it.”

“I’m sorry,” President García said after a moment, “but you will have to pay your tithing in order to receive the priesthood. Start now, and pay the Lord your tithing.”

I left his office in a thoughtful mood. After reviewing the law of

tithing later that day, I entered my room, knelt on the floor, and began to pray.

“Heavenly Father, if I have robbed Thee by not paying my tithing, I ask Thee to forgive me. I promise I will never again fail to pay it.”

The following Sunday at church I asked the branch president for another interview. I told him

Heavenly Father, if I have robbed Thee by not paying my tithing, I ask Thee to forgive me.”

I felt that the Lord had forgiven me and that He had accepted my commitment to pay tithing, which I began doing that very Sunday. “Am I worthy to receive the priesthood?” I asked.

“Yes,” he replied. “Today I will confer the Aaronic Priesthood upon you and ordain you to the office of deacon.”

Today I have a powerful testimony of tithing and the abundant blessings that come from paying it. In countless interviews since that Sunday more than 35 years ago, whenever my leaders have asked me if I pay a full tithe, I have been happy to answer yes! ■

Hildo Rosillo Flores, Piura, Peru

THEY ARE ALL MINE

“Are these all yours?” It’s a question I hear often, so it didn’t surprise me when I heard it from the lady behind me in line at the grocery store. I looked at my six-year-old and five-year-old daughters standing on either side of my full cart, my toddler happily swinging her legs from the seat in front, and my four-month-old baby strapped to my chest.

“Yes, they are all mine,” I said, smiling.

From the time my husband and I started our family, our choices about how many children to have and when to have them have often come into public question. The decision to have our first child was not a logical one, at

least not according to the standards of the world. We were still in our early 20s. Having just recently graduated from college, my husband was searching for a “real job.” We had a meager income and no insurance. Still, the impression was undeniable that spirits eagerly waited to come to our family, so we proceeded with faith.

We were blessed with a healthy pregnancy, a beautiful baby girl, and a stable job with a career track. I was grateful to be able to stay at home with my daughter and the three children who followed. All were brought into our family after strong divine impressions that the time was right, but that didn’t make it easy to

explain to others why we would have so many children so close together.

The many inquiries I unfailingly receive often question my judgment: “Why so many?” “Do you not realize how much it costs to raise a child to age 18?” “Can you really give each child the attention and opportunity he or she needs?” And, of course, “Are you done yet?”

I hope we’re *not* done, even though the years of parenting small children are intense and extremely challenging physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. There are days when children need to be fed, diapers need to be changed, babies need to be soothed, and noses need to be wiped—all at the same time. At such times I question my sanity and wonder if I know what I am doing. On those days the voice of the world seems to

laugh in derision, as if to say, “Told you so!”

But how grateful I am during those moments for the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the value it places on families. Every day I rely on gospel principles taught by prophets past and present to know that my work as a mother—and it *is* work—is the most important thing I could be doing in my life and is worth every effort. In answer to fervent prayer, I receive divine assistance daily to do what I am asked to do in my home. Through His tender mercies, a loving Father in Heaven allows those days of absolute exhaustion to come punctuated with moments of incandescent joy.

So to the woman at the grocery store and to others who wonder why I would devote my heart and soul to raising children, I proudly reply, “Yes, they are all mine—gratefully, whole-heartedly, and without hesitation!” ■

Karsen H. Cranney,
California, USA

The many inquiries I receive about having so many children so close together often question my judgment.

